

United States Government

Department of Energy
Bonneville Power Administration

memorandum

DATE: October 16, 2002

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: KEC-4

SUBJECT: Supplement Analysis for the Watershed Management Program EIS (DOE/EIS-0265/SA-93)

TO: Dorothy Welch, KEWU-4
Fish and Wildlife Project Manager

Proposed Action: Couse/Tenmile Creeks Six-Year Direct Seed Program

Project No: 2002-050-00

Watershed Management Techniques or Actions Addressed Under This Supplement

Analysis (See App. A of the Watershed Management Program EIS): 3.2 Conservation Cropping Sequence, 3.3 Conservation Tillage, 3.8 Delayed Seed Bed Preparation, 3.9 Grasses and Legumes in Rotation, 3.26 Evaluate Field Limitations, 3.27 Equipment Calibration and Use

Location: Various properties in Anatone, Asotin County, Washington

Proposed by: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) and The Asotin County Conservation District (ACCD).

Description of the Proposed Action: BPA proposes to fund a six-year direct seed program consistent with the ongoing improvement project within the Asotin Creek watershed. This portion of the ongoing restoration program within the Asotin Creek watershed is comprised of converting from traditional farming methods to no till/direct seeding in an effort to decrease erosion and in-stream sediment levels in Couse and Tenmile Creeks. These creeks are important tributaries to the Snake River for the spawning and rearing of steelhead.

The project consists of direct seeding measures on six different private properties located within a mile of either Couse or Tenmile Creeks. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and ACCD will manage the operation and maintenance of the projects. The total land area of the six properties involved in the direct seeding is 1315.7 acres. Most of the sediment delivered to the Snake River and its tributaries comes from the upland agricultural areas. 1.7 million tons of sediment moves from upland areas to streams each year, severely damaging water quality and fish habitat (S.E. WA Cooperative River Basin Study). In most instances, no-till/direct seed farming can reduce erosion by 95 percent. BPA will fund \$27.00 per acre for each of the first five years of the project.

Analysis: The compliance checklist for this project was completed by the ACCD, and meets the standards and guidelines for the Watershed Management Program Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Record of Decision (ROD).

There are no known threatened or endangered species present on the upland sites where the direct seed program will be implemented. Snake River summer steelhead are found in streams within the vicinity of the project areas, as well as peregrine falcon and bald eagle. In August 2002, ACCD determined this project would have No Effect on Endangered Species. BPA agrees with this determination and will not enter into ESA Section 7 consultation.

The actions of this Six-Year Direct Seed project fall under a larger, ongoing project called the Asotin Creek Model Watershed Plan. A Biological Assessment for the Asotin Creek Model Watershed Plan was submitted by ACCD and NRCS to NOAA Fisheries and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) with a No Effect Determination in 1998.

Under the larger Asotin Creek Model Watershed Plan, which includes this project area, the State Historic Preservation Office was consulted on May 5, 1999 and the Nez Perce Tribe was consulted on March 6, 1999, regarding cultural resources. No known cultural resources were found within the Direct Seed project area. If cultural resources are found during project implementation, NRCS policy and procedures will be followed.

To maintain public involvement, quarterly newsletters are mailed to all citizens in the Asotin County watershed as well as to most of the county residents, agency representatives in the District, and other related entities. Tours are held throughout the year for project review.

Findings: The project is generally consistent with the Northwest Power Planning Council's Fish and Wildlife Program, as well as BPA's Watershed Management Program EIS (DOE/EIS-0265) and ROD. This Supplement Analysis finds that: 1) implementing the proposed action will not result in any substantial changes to the Watershed Management Program that are relevant to environmental concerns; and 2) there are no significant new circumstances or information relevant to environmental concerns and bearing on the Watershed Management Program or its impacts. Therefore, no further NEPA documentation is required.

/s/ Kelly Mason 10-16-2002

Kelly Mason

Environmental Specialist

CONCUR:

/s/ James Kehoe for

Thomas C. McKinney

NEPA Compliance Officer

DATE: 10-16-2002

Attachments:

NEPA Compliance Checklist

No Effect Determination letter

cc: (w/ attachments)

Mr. Bradley Johnson – Asotin County Conservation District